

## New records and amendments to the birds of Angola

by W. R. J. Dean, R. J. Dowsett, Alison Sakko  
& R. E. Simmons

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The recent checklist of the birds of Angola (Dean 2000) contains some errors and omissions. In two cases these refer to species whose unproven occurrence were inadvertently listed as definite records (Gabon Woodpecker *Dendropicos gabonensis* and Blue Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina azurea*), while others refer to incorrect locality details. Subsequent to the publication of Dean (2000), the presence of Lesser Spotted Eagles *Aquila pomarina* has been confirmed by the results of a satellite-tracking study (Meyburg *et al.* 2001) and seven species, Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea [epomophora] sanfordi*, Spectacled Petrel *Procellaria conspicillata*, Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*, White-tailed Tropicbird *P. lepturus*, Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicaria*, Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* and Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* have been added to the Angolan list (Lambert, in press). Some new distributional and breeding data have also been provided by colleagues, including the results of one count of waterbirds along c. 150 km of coast between Tombua and Baia dos Tigres in January 1999 by AS, and four counts of birds at the Cunene river mouth by RES. Amendments to species accounts follow:

### WHITE-BREASTED CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

There are few breeding records for this common species for Angola (Dean 2000). It is of interest to note that c.50 pairs were nesting on the remnants of jetties at the abandoned settlements of Armacão and Baia dos Tigres on the eastern shore of the now uninhabited island of Ilha dos Tigres in January 1999 (AS). Two groups of nests, one of 4 active nests (2 with 3y, 2 with 2y) on a cliff, and another of 22 active nests were found 8 km upstream from the mouth of the Cunene river on 12 November 2000 (RES).

### CAPE CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax capensis*

Although considered to be mainly a winter visitor to the south-western Angolan coast (Dean 2000), Brooke (1981) suggested that small numbers may breed on islands off the Angolan coast. A large group of Cape Cormorants seen during an aerial reconnaissance of Ilha dos Tigres in August 1996 were thought to be nesting (P.D. Morant, in Dean 2000). About 200-300 nests containing eggs and chicks were recorded in January 1999 on two old jetties at the same localities on Ilha dos Tigres as the White-breasted Cormorants above (AS). In February 2001 an estimated 1000 pairs were nesting on the ground along the eastern edge of the island (Rico Sakko, pers. comm.). This is a substantial northward extension of c.300 km of the breeding

range in this species (see Crawford 2000). The previous northernmost breeding records were on the Skeleton Coast of Namibia, at Die Oase (19° 27'S, 12°49'E) and Terrace Bay (19° 59'S, 13° 02'E) (Cooper *et al.* 1982).

#### **GREAT WHITE PELICAN** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Fishermen from the boats that currently fish in the area of Ilha dos Tigres have reported Great White Pelicans breeding on the southern tip of the island during 2001. P. D. Morant (in Dean 2000) suggested that the species nests on Ilha dos Tigres, so the report is not unexpected. About 200 birds were seen there in June and September 2001, including *c.* 50 dark flightless juveniles (A. Schoeman & J. Paterson, pers. comm. to RES). The birds are abundant residents at the Cunene river mouth (Brooke 1981, Simmons *et al.* 1993) and are commonly seen at Baia dos Tigres (Morant 1996).

#### **LESSER FLAMINGO** *Phoeniconaias minor*

Only April, May, July, August, and October were given as months of occurrence by Dean (2000). About 360 Lesser Flamingos were counted in January 1999 at Baia dos Tigres (AS).

#### **OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

There are few records for this species for Angola. About 10 individual adults are present all year round, regularly spaced along the whole stretch of coast between Tombua (15°48'S, 11°51'E) and the town of Namibe (AS).

#### **LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE** *Aquila pomarina*

Placed in square brackets by Dean (2000), as a species likely to occur, but for which there were no records. A recent satellite-tracking study, which traced the routes used by a sub-adult and an immature Lesser Spotted Eagle from northern Namibia, shows that this species does indeed occur in southern and eastern Angola (Meyburg *et al.* 2001). The immature bird was located at 16°11'S, 15°14'E (due west of Mupa, Cunene Province) on 26 February 1994, and at 15°49'S, 18°44'E (east of Cubia, Cuando Cubango Province) on 3 March, from where it flew north-east across eastern Angola and Zambia. The sub-adult bird was located at 16°07'S, 18°04'E (east of Techimpolo, Cunene Province) on 1 April 1994, from where it continued north-easterly through eastern Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

#### **TAWNY EAGLE** *Aquila rapax*

Dean (2000) had no records of eggs for this common species. An overlooked record is of an adult incubating eggs on a nest 15 m up in a *Cassine* tree, 12 km north of Ondjiva (17°04'S, 15°43'E), Cunene Province, on 18 May 1973 (WRJD).

#### **ORANGE RIVER FRANCOLIN** *Francolinus levaillantoides*

Dean (2000) erroneously noted that this species occurred in Moxico Province, whereas it is more or less confined to the more arid southwest from Cahama (16°17'S,

14°18'E) in Cunene west to Namibe Province and north to about Lobito (12°22'S, 13°32'E) in Benguela Province (Pinto 1983).

#### **AFRICAN BLACK OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus moquini*

Listed as rare by Dean (2000), with few actual sightings. A total of 35 were recorded in January 1999 at Ilha dos Tigres (16°36'S, 11°43'E), and one was recorded as far north as the town of Namibe (15°12'S, 12°09'E), also in January 1999 (AS).

#### **KELP GULL** *Larus dominicanus*

Considered to be an uncommon non-breeding visitor by Dean (2000). A large number (estimated >500 pairs) were nesting in an area from Marco do Farol south to Armacão on the north-eastern edge of the now uninhabited island of Ilha dos Tigres in January 1999, with nests at all stages from eggs to newly-hatched and recently fledged chicks (AS). In February 2001, similar numbers were nesting on a patch on the north-western edge of the island (Rico Sakko, pers. comm.). This represents a substantial northward extension of c.200 km of the breeding range for this species, with previous northernmost breeding records on the Skeleton Coast of Namibia at Torra Bay (20°10'S, 13°10'E), Die Oase (19°27'S, 12°49'E) and Cape Fria (18°26'S, 12°00'E) (Bridgford 1982).

#### **SWIFT TERN** *Sterna bergii*

It is likely that this species occurs within the borders of Angola, and rather more frequently than stated by Dean (2000). Bird counts at the mouth of the Cunene river (17°23'S, 11°47'E) suggest that its occurrence is seasonal there, and along the coast of extreme south-western Namibe Province, apparently present all year round, but more common in April-June, and in November (RES).

#### **WHITE-THROATED BEE-EATER** *Merops albicollis*

Apart from the Petit specimens from Condé (4°58'S, 12°24'E), Cabinda, mentioned by Dean (2000), there is another specimen, from "Angola" (Traylor 1963). Although the locality where this specimen was collected is not precisely known, Pinto (1983) stated that the specimen was collected "sul do Zaire, é apontado por Hartlaub [1857], para Angola, um record muito antigo devido a Handersson", suggesting that the specimen was collected in Angola and not north of the Zaire river in Cabinda. In fact, evidence suggests that C.J. Andersson (sic) (1827-1867) collected exclusively in Namibia (especially) and South Africa.

#### **MONTEIRO'S HORNBILL** *Tockus monteiri*

The most northerly locality in Benguela is more accurately Lobito (12°22'S, 13°32'E), rather than Baia Farta (12°37'S, 13°13'E) as given in Dean (2000).

#### **[GABON WOODPECKER** *Dendropicus gabonensis*

This species should be placed in square brackets in Dean (2000), as its occurrence in Angola is unproven. The specimens from Cacongo (formerly Lândana) (5°13'S,

12°08'E), Cabinda, collected in 1876 by Petit, were listed as *Dendropicos lafresnayi* by Sharpe & Bouvier (1876) (i.e. Cardinal Woodpecker *D. fuscescens*).]

**BROWN-THROATED MARTIN** *Riparia paludicola*

An overlooked record of three specimens collected on 17 August at Santa Cruz de Mavinga, 16°19'S; 22°02'E ("Santa Cruz, in Angola near Shangombo") by Benson (1956) extends the known distribution in Angola to Cuando-Cubango Province.

**[BLUE CUCKOO-SHRIKE** *Coracina azurea*

The locality Kimongo (4°40'S, 12°57'E), where Petit collected the only "Angolan" specimen (Sharpe & Bouvier 1877; Traylor 1963; Dean 2000), is in fact in Congo-Brazzaville, though only a few km from the border. The species should be in square brackets, though will almost certainly be found to occur in Angola.]

**LESSER SWAMP-WARBLER** *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

No breeding records for Angola for this locally common resident were given by Dean (2000). Although technically not in Angola, a nest, placed in dense *Phragmites* reeds on the Namibian bank of the Cunene river, was found with one egg and one chick on 8 November 2000 (RES).

**COLLARED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula albicollis*

Dean (2000), on the basis of Pinto's (1970) comments, and two specimens, one collected at Huíla town (15°05'S, 13°33'E) and a ringed bird recovered at Dundo (7°22'S, 20°50'E), gave the known distribution of this species in Angola as Huíla and Lunda Norte Provinces. A third specimen, in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada, collected by Jean Bodaly at Chitau (11°15'S, 17°08'E, altitude c. 1,500 m), Bié, and unfortunately without date, extends the distribution to eastern Bié Province.

**YELLOW-THROATED NICATOR** *Nicator vireo*

Dean (2000) erroneously gave the distribution of this species as (*inter alia*) "east to Lunda Sul" citing Traylor (1963). This should read "east to northeastern Lunda Norte (Ripley & Heinrich 1966)", based on a specimen collected by G. Heinrich on the Cassai river at about 7°38'S, 21°32'E in Lunda Norte.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

There are few distribution records for this species. Dean (2000) noted only that there were records for Namibe town and Lubango and that it was likely to occur in other towns and cities. Common on the Ilha and Morro Bento at Luanda (8°49'S, 13°13'E) in June 2001 (P.D. Morant, pers. comm.).

**BLACK-NECKED WEAVER** *Ploceus nigricollis*

Distribution given erroneously as "east to Lunda Sul" by Dean (2000). Collected at Songo (formerly Nova Gaia) (10°04'S, 17°33'E) in Malanje, not far west of the

Lunda Sul border. A species of secondary and coffee forest, and likely to occur more widely than present records indicate.

### **BLACK-EARED CANARY** *Serinus mennelli*

The record from Cuanza Sul (Amboiva) (11°32'S, 14°44'E) is so very far west of the known range in eastern Angola that the specimen reported by Traylor (1963) ought to be re-examined. There are suitable patches of climax miombo (*Brachystegia*) woodland from eastern Moxico through Bié and Malanje west to Cuanza Sul, and south to Huíla, and theoretically the species could occur all the way west. There are two uncertain sight records by WRJD at N'Gola (14°20'S, 14°28'E), Huíla, but the species was not recorded by Pinto (1970) for Huíla Province. The possibility remains that the Amboiva specimen, if correctly identified (apparently in the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola collection, now under the care of the Instituto de Ciências da Educação, Lubango, and not accessible for examination) is perhaps most likely of an escaped cage-bird. Alternatively, the Amboiva specimen could be a mis-identified Streaky-headed Canary *Serinus gularis*, a species that has not as yet been recorded from the Amboiva district, but that is more likely to occur there.

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*Addresses:* Dr W. R. J. Dean (*e-mail:* lycium@mweb.co.za) and Dr R. E. Simmons (*email:* harrier@iafrica.com.na), Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa; R. J. Dowsett, 12 rue des Lavandes, Ganges F-34190, France (*e-mail:* Dowsett@aol.com); Dr Alison Sakko, P. O. Box 4426, Vineta, Swakopmund, Namibia (*email:* woodstock@iml-net.com.na).

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## **Differentiation of *Xiphocolaptes* (Dendrocolaptidae) across the river Xingu, Brazilian Amazonia: recognition of a new phylogenetic species and biogeographic implications**

by *José Maria C. da Silva, Fernando C. Novaes  
& David C. Oren*

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The genus *Xiphocolaptes* encompasses several of the largest (> 100 g) species of forest and woodland woodcreepers in the Neotropical region. The species with the largest geographical range in the genus is the highly variable Strong-billed Woodcreeper *X. promeropirhynchus*, found from Mexico to Bolivia (Peters 1945). Within this range, 23 subspecies are recognized (Peters 1945). Cory & Hellmayr (1925) suggested that the subspecies of *X. promeropirhynchus* can be grouped into two species: *X. promerophyrhynchus*, the highland group, occupying Central America, mountains of northern Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia; and *X. orenocensis*, the lowland group, restricted to the Orinoco and Amazon basins. Although this arrangement was accepted by some authors (e.g., Gyldenstope 1951), it has not been followed by most recent taxonomists (e.g. Zimmer 1934, Peters 1945, Pinto 1978, Meyer de Schauensee 1978, Sibley & Monroe 1994). Ridgely & Tudor (1994) stated that it is premature to split *orenocensis* and *promeropirhynchus* without additional study, although they indicated that there is an altitudinal gap between the two forms along parts of the eastern slope of the Andes.

According to Hellmayr (1925), Peters (1951), Pinto (1978) and Ridgely & Tudor (1994), the *orenocensis* group is composed of six taxa: *orenocensis* (southern